

long time, to deepen America's ties with one of our most important partners and allies.

For most of this century, as Turkey and the United States come closer together, our relationship has been distinguished by an increasing sense of how much, together, we can do to improve the lives of our people.

The recent earthquakes have humbled us, reminding us that for all of the advances and our own capacity to shape the future, there is much in life that lies utterly beyond our control. No one could have foreseen or avoided the terrible tragedy that struck Turkey on August 17th, or the earthquake which came again just last week.

I want to express, on behalf of the American people, again, our profound sympathies and condolences to all the people of Turkey for all that you have lost. We have been honored to stand with you as you have worked so heroically to clear the damaged areas from the first earthquake and to return as best as possible to the cadence of normal life. And we pledge to work with you as you deal with this natural tragedy, as well. The United States is proud to stand with Turkey in good times or bad, against cruel natural calamities, terrorism, or other threats to freedom and democracy.

With regard to the earthquake, we have dispatched a search and rescue team to the area and sent tents to house 10,000 people made homeless. Our Export-Import Bank has allocated \$1 billion in lending authority to help Turkish businesses finance projects related to reconstruction. We will continue to do all we can to speed your recovery, to encourage private investment, to help you prepare for future natural disasters. I would also like to express my appreciation for the swift response from many other nations, including Greece, to the needs of the people of Turkey at this moment.

Mr. President, over the next 5 days, I will have the opportunity to be in your nation on the longest visit ever by an American President to Turkey. I want to express my solidarity with the Turkish people and America's commitment to Turkey's future. We will work for a future in which Turkey continues to be an ally of America, a partner in the new Europe, and reconciled with others in the region, especially our friends in Greece.

I thank you for the opportunity today to meet with leaders of Turkish democracy in Ankara and the opportunity to speak to the members of the Grand National Assembly, and then for the opportunity to go to Istanbul to participate with you and 50 other leaders at the OSCE Summit. I thank you for the opportunity to go and see some of the survivors of the first earthquake, to learn about what we in America still can do to help.

Mr. President, you mentioned that it was 10 years ago this month that the Berlin Wall fell. I want to thank you again for the partnership we have had for peace and freedom with Turkey in the years since, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I thank you for sharing the lesson we are still learning in times of agony as well as joy. We are all in this together. And to me that means, in part, we must continue to fulfill a vision of a Europe undivided, democratic, in peace for the first time in history, anchored by a stable and prosperous Turkey.

Mr. President, this week I pledge to you that I will work with you to fulfill the promise of that unified, whole, free Europe. With Europe—a Europe that includes Turkey—and a partnership with Turkey and the United States that includes our commitment to freedom and opportunity for all people, we have a chance to start a new century on higher ground. And the success of our partnership will have a lot to do with that.

Thank you again for welcoming me and for being a genuine friend to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:15 a.m. on the Lawn of the Official Residence of the President. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and his wife, Nazmiye. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Demirel.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters in Ankara

November 15, 1999

President Demirel. Distinguished members of the press, I would like to welcome

once again in your presence, the President of the United States, my dear friend Bill Clinton. Mr. Clinton is in our country for a 5-day visit.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to, in Mr. Clinton's person, express our thanks to the American people for the support and solidarity they have shown during the disasters that affected our country, one after another, in recent months.

The Republic of Turkey and the United States of America work together for peace, stability, and prosperity on a vast geography which extends from the Balkans to the Caucasus, central Asia to the Middle East, Europe to the Black Sea, Caspian, and the Mediterranean Basin.

Earlier today we had an extensive exchange of views and opinions as two strategic partners. We discussed our contribution to regional peace, stability, and prosperity. We also reviewed areas where we can improve cooperation. We were pleased to note that both of us had the determination to evaluate new and broader avenues of cooperation between our countries.

We explained to the President our activities in the areas of economy, trade, and energy, and the importance we place on cooperation with the EU in this context. We also discussed defense cooperation and regional security issues. We evaluated our joint projects together. And we explored new possibilities for deepening our relations even further.

And we listened to the views of the President of the United States regarding the opinion and attitude of the United States on these subjects. President Clinton shares our view that it's very important for Turkey—as a country where democracy, Islam, and secularism are proven to coexist—to become an EU member in order to realize the project of a pluralist, democratic Europe with rich diversity.

In light of these views, we reviewed Turkey's relations with the European Union on the eve of the Helsinki summit. We explained once again to the President the assessment of the Turkish Republic regarding the European Union. We also expressed Turkey's contractual rights for EU membership. And we stressed our expectation from the

European Union to focus on the proper perspective on this matter this time.

President Clinton has confirmed continued support of the U.S. for Turkey's membership to the EU. I can say that the meetings between two friends and allies that have strong bonds were beneficial and productive and that we were able to review common areas of interest, attention, and action that are included in the broad spectrum of the Turkish-American strategic partnership.

Our friendship with the United States is an important guarantee for the success for our common goals and ideals. This friendship will be fruitful in the future, and joint efforts by the United States and Turkey will bring further peace, stability, and prosperity to a vast geography.

I would like to welcome Mr. Clinton once again and wish him a good time in Turkey. Thank you all.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to thank you, the Prime Minister, and the members of the Turkish Government for your warm welcome here today, and reiterate the profound sympathies of the American people with the people of Turkey as a result of these two earthquakes.

The President has summarized our meeting quite well, and so I will just briefly add a couple of points. We spoke about the coming OSCE meeting, which Turkey will host. It is fitting that Turkey would be the host in this final year of the 20th century, when the agenda for Europe is to build a Europe that for the first time in history is undivided, democratic, and at peace. For Turkey is the key to meeting all the challenges that remained of that vision of Europe: the challenge of integrating Russia, of stabilizing the Balkans, of bringing a real peace to the Aegean and Cyprus, of bridging the gulf between the West and the Islamic world. In these areas and more, Turkey and the United States should be partners.

In that regard, I thank the President and the Prime Minister for the principled stand Turkey took in Kosovo and for Turkey's leadership today in bringing peace and prosperity to the Balkans.

We also had a very good conversation about the hopeful progress in cooperation

between Turkey and Greece, an issue of profound importance to the United States because of our friendship with both nations and because of our strong support for Turkey's full partnership in the European Union. I expressed my hope that the coming talks on Cyprus will bring us closer to lasting peace with real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

We discussed the importance of continuing to integrate Russia with Europe as a strong, stable, democratic nation, and our shared concern that the mounting civilian casualties in Chechnya will hinder that goal.

We talked about energy security in the Caspian, and I reaffirmed America's commitment to making the Baku-Ceyhan and the trans-Caspian pipelines commercial realities, and my appreciation for the leadership of President Demirel and others toward that goal.

Finally, we discussed Turkey's progress in deepening its democracy and strengthening human rights. There has been impressive momentum in the last few years, and I hope there will be continued progress, especially in the area of freedom of expression.

In closing, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your friendship, for your commitment to our alliance. And I want to once again reaffirm my personal strong support for Turkey's European Union candidacy as it moves forward in all the areas that we have discussed today.

Thank you very much.

World Trade Organization Talks in China

Q. Mr. President, on the WTO deal that you announced today, did China go beyond the concessions that it offered in April? And if so, could you say where and how far? And does this mean that China will be able to have an active role in the WTO talks in Seattle?

President Clinton. The answer to the first question is that we—I think the fair answer is that we finished a lot of the matters which were left unresolved when we were meeting in the springtime in Washington. I don't think it's fair to the Chinese or to the United States to give the inference that either one made massive new concessions.

I think that there were matters that were still outstanding that we were able to resolve and work through, and I'm very grateful, frankly, for the leadership of Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling on our side and for all those on the Chinese side. I think this is a good agreement for China and for America and for the world. I think that all of us benefit when the most populous nation in the world is now going to be part of a rule-based system that will bring shared prosperity.

The answer to your second question—the short answer to your second question is, I don't know. That is, I honestly don't know how this changes the specific formal role that China might play at Seattle. But as I'm sure you know, all the developing nations have been taking various positions on these issues. And I would certainly hope that the conclusion of this agreement between ourselves and China will lead to the rapid accession of China to the WTO and would lead the Chinese to urge other developing countries to take the same sort of comprehensive approach to their participation in the world economic system, because I think that will bring the quickest benefits to them and to the rest of the world.

Allegations of Repression and Torture in Turkey

Q. A question for both of you, please. Mr. President, what do you say to allegations of repression and torture in your country? And President Clinton, do you believe these allegations; are they a serious impediment to Turkish-American relations? And I speak now partly of the Kurds, but also other dissident groups.

President Demirel. It is impossible to say that there is no torture in Turkey; there is torture. But torture is not state policy. Torture is a crime. And whoever commits this crime, no matter who that person may be, that person is investigated and is penalized accordingly. And I can say that we are doing everything we can to make sure that there is no torture.

President Clinton. Let me, in response to your question, say that we believe that there has been a renewed and clear determination of the Turkish Government to take

a stand against torture and to generally increase protection of human rights. There are some non-torture areas that we hope there will continue to be progress in, like freedom of expression. But President Demirel has faithfully stated, I think, the policy of the Turkish Government. And we are encouraged that the human rights issue is moving in the right direction in this nation.

Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to ask, have you observed a rapid development in the Turkish-American relationship, especially in the last years? Can you briefly describe the current status of the Turkish-American relations from the point of view of America?

President Clinton. Well, I would say from the point of view of America, they are very good. And I could give you some specific examples—one, our partnership in the Balkans, first in Bosnia and then in Kosovo, to stand up for human rights; two, our commitment to energy security in the region, and the support of the pipelines projects I mentioned earlier; three, the improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece, something which has always been a little bit of a limitation on our partnership, because of our ties to both countries; and four, the economic and political reforms undertaken by Turkey in the last year and several months have been very impressive to us.

So, for all these reasons, I would say that the state of our partnership is strong, and I just want the United States to be in a position to give more economic assistance and more political support as we move toward our shared objectives.

Turkey and the European Union

Q. Mr. President, could you please tell us how determined you will continue to be in supporting Turkey's efforts with EU?

President Clinton. Excuse me. Did you ask me how determined am I to do that, or in what ways will I do that, or both?

Well, let me say first of all, I am very determined to support Turkish membership in the EU for a very good reason. I think if you—any of you, including my American colleagues here—if you were to go home tonight

and make a list of the big problems you think the world could face in the next 10 or 20 years, every one of them would be strengthened if Turkey were a full partner in a Europe that respected religious and cultural diversity and shared devotion to democracy and human rights.

I might say that's one of the reasons I am so pleased by the recent improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece and why I think it's so important to continue to make progress there, because the difficulties between the two nations are small when compared to the benefits of cooperation and European integration, both to Turkey and to Greece.

As to how I intend to express my support, I will continue to talk to the leaders of Europe. I take every opportunity that I have to have this discussion. I feel very strongly that one of the four or five key questions to the future of this whole part of the world is whether Turkey is a full partner with the European Union. So I will continue to advocate it.

President Demirel. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:15 p.m. in the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey. President Demirel spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara

November 15, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, distinguished members, it is a great honor for me and my family and for our delegation to appear before this body, the repository of Turkish sovereignty which, as the words behind me affirm, belongs unconditionally and without exception to the people.

I have come to express America's solidarity with the Turkish people at a time of national tragedy and to reaffirm our partnership for a common future. We have been friends for a very long time.

In 1863 the first American college outside the United States, Robert College, opened its doors to the youth of Turkey. It was the